

CHAPTER 11

RECREATION, ATHLETICS, AND HOME SAFETY

Off-duty mishaps outnumber shipboard and industrial mishaps. The Navy is concerned with personnel both on and off duty. In addition to traffic safety, discussed in chapter 10, the Navy has developed the Navy Recreation, Athletics, and Home Safety Program.

Sports and recreation are in the Navy to stay. In addition to raising morale, these activities contribute to the development of leadership. The service member meets many conditions in sports activities that are similar to conditions in combat. In athletic competition, an individual can develop various qualities to levels unattainable by other means. These qualities include personal courage, confidence, aggressiveness, and determination. These same qualities, which are essential in combat, can lead to mishaps and injuries in sports competition. Somehow we must find the “fine line” between courage and recklessness, between confidence and unrealistic appraisal of a situation, and between determination and inappropriate stubbornness. Finding the “fine line” reduces mishaps and injuries. We can achieve that fine line through proper supervision, effective instruction, and proper training of participants.

It is Navy policy to provide Navy personnel, and their families, programs that will effectively contribute to their morale and well being. All personnel should include some form of exercise in their daily routine to attain and maintain an acceptable state of physical fitness. The Navy recommends that personnel take part in vigorous sports activities to maintain desired levels of physical fitness.

An old adage says, “A man’s home is his castle.” Unfortunately, that very same castle can lead to a variety of mishaps. You can prevent many home mishaps, such as children’s poisoning, lawn mower mishaps, and fires. Whether a mishap affects the sailor or the sailor’s family, it still affects the Navy. A safe attitude on the job needs to extend to the home and off-duty hours.

In this chapter, we discuss the following areas of the Navy Recreation, Athletics, and Home Safety Program:

- Recreation, athletics, and home safety training
- Facilities evaluation and inspections
- Personal protective equipment

- Recreational safety controls
- Safety for recreational activities
- Safety for athletic activities
- Safety in the home
- Off-duty mishap investigation and reporting

NAVY RECREATION, ATHLETICS, AND HOME SAFETY PROGRAM

The Navy issued a directive dealing with recreation, athletics, and home safety in 1987 and updated it in 1990. *Navy Recreation, Athletics, and Home Safety Program*, OPNAVINST 5100.25A, sets up policy and procedures for executing this program ashore and afloat. This program applies to the following personnel:

- All military personnel on or off base
- Military dependents while on government property and while taking part in command-sponsored events off base

That means you are covered during an off-base softball game as part of the command’s team or as a spectator. It applies to you while you swim in the base pool and to the members of your family as they watch you at the base bowling alley. It also covers you if you get hurt while repairing your car in your garage at home.

NAVY RECREATION, ATHLETICS, AND HOME SAFETY TRAINING

The Recreation, Athletics, and Home Safety (RAHS) Program manager must make sure military personnel receive training on recreation, athletics, and home safety at least quarterly. The program recommends that civilian personnel also receive this training.

Work center supervisors and department/division safety petty officers should conduct this training. When you are responsible for this training, make sure it is seasonal and geographically appropriate. Conduct the training before or during those times of the year when personnel are at risk.

You can use Plan of the Day (POD) notes, posters, stand-up lectures, and video tapes to help you with this training. You can also use athletic team training as another way to train personnel in athletic safety.

The following are some of the recreation, athletics, and home safety topics that should be covered during training each year:

- Basketball (responsible for the most lost time of any sport)
- Physical fitness
- Water sports
- Racquetball
- Football
- Softball
- Hobby safety

Qualification Training

Patrons using recreational watercraft and Navy automotive and woodworking hobby-shop equipment expose themselves to high-hazard activities. Morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) staff members make sure only qualified patrons safely operate watercraft, power tools, hydraulic lifts, and spray paint booths. Staff members should keep a record of those who qualify.

Competent MWR staff members should conduct training in the use of this equipment. They should emphasize the use of safety precautions, safety equipment guards, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

The health hazards associated with spray painting require additional precautions. MWR employees must advise patrons in writing of the hazards spray painting poses. An MWR employee must observe patrons throughout the spray painting evolution.

Qualification training for watercraft includes basic rules of the road, knowledge of personal flotation devices (PFDs), applicable safety requirements, and emergency procedures. Successfully completing a small boat safety course, such as that offered by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, is evidence of qualification.

Recordkeeping of Training

Commands must maintain all training records for 2 years. Documentation should include a log of scheduled training, dates of training, and names of personnel attending. Each department should maintain its own

training records. These records will be available for annual inspections.

FACILITIES EVALUATION AND INSPECTIONS

Recreational and hobby facilities and equipment used by military patrons and dependents will be of safe design. The facility must provide a safe and healthful setting for patrons as well as workers.

Each command must inspect and evaluate its recreational facilities and equipment annually. These facilities and equipment include game rooms, hobby shops, shipboard gyms, and workout and weight-lifting areas. Ashore, they include all the facilities run by fleet recreation and special services. Ships with enough athletic equipment to checkout, such as volleyballs and basketballs, must also have written recreational safety measures. Naval Safety Center (NAVSAFECEN) policies require these measures to reduce the possibility of injury to participants and spectators.

The safety and health personnel and the designated RAHS Program manager should jointly conduct the inspection. The inspection identifies hazards and ensures the execution of abatement plans. NMPCINST 1710.6A, *Aquatic Programs and Facilities*, governs the inspection of swimming pools and waterfront areas. Applicable Navy standards govern the inspection of other recreational facilities. A summary of these standards and other requirements for program administration is available from the NAVSAFECEN.

Personnel checking out athletic equipment must ensure it is in good condition. Staff personnel should check gym equipment for sharp edges, loose or worn parts, and obstruction hazards. Poorly made athletic equipment, which may not stand up to heavy use, should not be used.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

You have no choice about wearing several types of personal protective equipment (PPE). BUPERSINST 1710.20 states that personnel must wear approved eye protection when playing squash, handball, and racquetball. Eye protection is not the only PPE required during an athletic event. Certain athletic events and work at the hobby shop require the use of mouthpieces, hand protection, and other types of protective equipment. Did you know that mouthpieces are credited with preventing about 200,000 injuries in high school and college football alone?

Navy RAHS Program managers are responsible for educating people about off-duty hazards and stressing the importance of using PPE for sports. The game players are responsible for wearing the required eye-protective equipment while playing games. The facility manager has the responsibility and authority for ensuring all players wear the proper safety equipment. All commands are required to provide PPE for recreational and athletic activities. For example, if you check out a racquetball racket, the command should provide safety glasses.

The use of PPE should also be emphasized for hobby shop patrons or personnel working at home. For example, training should cover the wearing of safety glasses or goggles and hard-soled shoes while mowing the lawn.

RECREATIONAL SAFETY CONTROLS

Most sports have inherent hazards we cannot eliminate without compromising the game. However, many preventable mishaps occur during recreational activities. We can prevent athletic injuries by providing better training and the proper PPE. Most athletic injuries result from people being out of condition or not warming up before an event. Practically all sports involve some type of hazard since they center around the principles of attack and retreat. But, if you take the proper safety control measures, you can reduce most of the injury-causing hazards.

Administrative Controls

To ensure safe recreational activities for personnel, commands should provide protective control in the form of rules and procedures. They should also provide qualified physical training instructors, special services officers, and recreational leaders. Commands should select recreational personnel based on their experience. However, they should also consider their familiarity with, interest in, and ability to instruct or supervise activities.

Installations should set up effective programs to make certain the proper PPE is on hand when needed. In addition, commands must make sure that facilities are available and that leaders are present to supervise the events.

Leadership and Supervision

When supervising or coaching an athletic event, you must be aware of several factors. One factor is

leadership. Good leadership promotes safety at recreational activities. You must consider the physical differences of the participants. As a leader, you also must understand the goal of the sport involved and demand complete observance of the rules.

If you are a recreational leader, give preliminary instructions to all players and thoroughly indoctrinate beginners in the basics of the sport. You can do that through a progressive training program. To avoid mishaps caused by confusion, make sure all players clearly understand your instructions.

As a recreational supervisor or coach, make sure all injured persons receive immediate medical attention. Make sure participants do not drink alcoholic beverages before or during play.

Before allowing players to engage in any vigorous sport, put them through a warm-up period. Without preliminary warm-ups, your players are more likely to be injured.

Qualified officials must manage all sports contests, whether intramural or extramural. They must make sure the participants carefully follow the standard rules of the game.

Personal Responsibility

As a participant in an athletic event, you have several responsibilities. One is to protect yourself from injury. You should not continue to participate, practice, or play in events when you are excessively tired. Before play starts, warm up. Do not try a new game or practice a new athletic skill without direct supervision of a qualified monitor. Make sure your equipment fits properly and you know how to use it. Wear only clean clothing and equipment next to your skin. Do not take unnecessary chances. Pay strict attention to how to play the game.

SAFETY FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Recreational safety includes many outdoor activities, such as water sports, hunting, bicycling, and ice and snow sports.

The most deadly recreational activities, by far, are conducted on or near the water. Watersports can be fun. The thrill of boating, waterskiing, scuba diving, or even just fishing have long been a part of our leisure time. However, we must respect water. Water can be deadly to both children and adults alike. Drowning is the leading killer of Navy people in recreational mishaps

and the third leading cause of accidental deaths in the United States. From 1987 to 1992, 42 percent of all Navy people killed in recreational mishaps died from drowning. You can prevent drowning by knowing some common water-safety tips.

Swimming

About 45 percent of all drownings involve people falling in the water while walking on piers and bridges or fishing from boats. Many victims were poor swimmers who lacked basic water skills.

If you are going to spend time near the water, you should know how to swim. Swimming is your best defense against drowning. You should know how to swim even if you never expect to go in the water. You may someday have the opportunity to save a drowning person's life.

Always swim with a friend. The buddy system saves lives. Swim only in designated areas. Undesignated swimming areas may have hidden hazards that can kill you.

Teach your children how to swim. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental deaths in children. NEVER leave a child alone near a swimming pool or swimming area. Many parents think they can hear their child fall into a pool. They are wrong. Drowning is a silent killer. There is usually no loud splash or cry for help because the first gasp for air fills a child's lungs with water, blocking all sound. Child-proof your pool. Install a double layer of protection around your pool. Build a fence at fence five feet high around the pool with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Make sure the latch is out of children's reach. You also can buy an electronic sensor that floats in the pool and sounds an alarm if something disturbs the water.

Beware of cold water. Chances of survival in 50-degree water are only 50-50 if you are exposed for 50 minutes. If you are alone, use the heat escape lessening position (HELP). To do that, huddle to conserve heat by crossing your arms and feet and pulling your knees up (fig. 11-1). You can die from hypothermia, even if you fall into water as warm as 70 degrees, if you stay immersed long enough. If you have several people in the water, huddle together in a circle (fig. 11-2). For either of these techniques to be effective, you must be wearing an approved personal flotation device.

Do not jump or dive into water that may be so cold it will numb your body. Instead, ease into the water

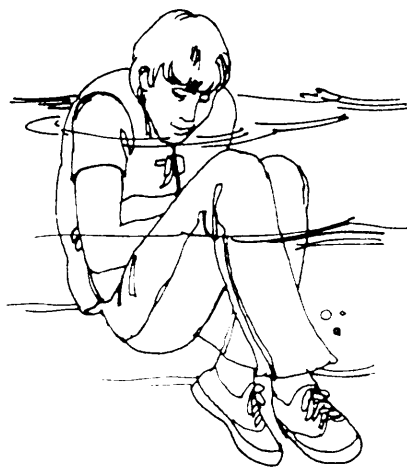


Figure 11-1.—Heat escape lessening position (HELP).

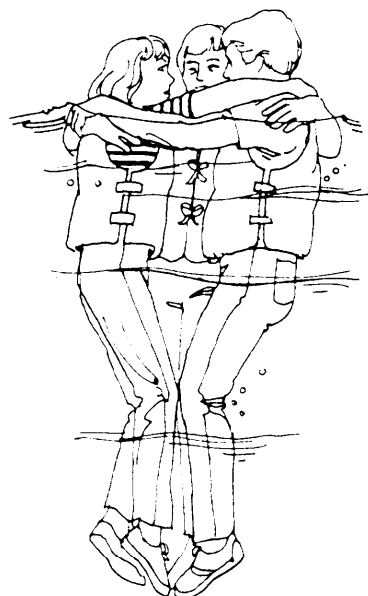


Figure 11-2.—Huddle position

gradually. Cold water exhausts a swimmer faster than warm water. Do not swim long distances in cold water. Cold or tired muscles are susceptible to cramps. To overcome a cramp, draw your knees toward your chest and massage your cramped foot or leg while moving it. You should be in a "face forward" float position while doing that.

Know and consider your swimming limitations. Do not swim when you are tired, overheated, or chilled. If you find yourself fatigued, you can find temporary relief by floating, treading water on your back, or varying the style of swimming. If you find yourself in trouble,

conserve strength as much as possible. You can do that by resting on your back in a floating position with a minimum amount of motion.

We have said this before, but we will say it again: NEVER drink and swim. Alcohol and water are a deadly combination. Alcohol dilates the blood vessels and your body loses heat faster. It also impairs your judgment and increases risk-taking.

Look before you dive! Shallow water dives could leave you paralyzed for life. It did for two Navy people in 1992. Know the depth of the water before your dive. Never dive in unknown waters.

If you have a history of ear trouble, check with your doctor before swimming. Try to avoid swimming underwater. You may use commercial plugs to keep water out of the ear canal. If you fear eye infections or irritations, wear a face mask or goggles.

Except in an emergency, avoid swimming in the dark. Finally, never jokingly call for help.

Scuba, Skin, and Cave Diving

Skin diving, scuba diving, and cave diving are demanding swimming sports that require a person to be in good physical condition. These activities also require good swimming ability and a thorough knowledge of the sport. Two Navy service members drown almost every year during recreational diving. The main reason is lack of training and certification. Proper certification is essential to diving safely. Open water scuba diving certification does not qualify a person for cave or cavern diving.

All divers should get a physical examination by a doctor who is aware of the special hazards and demands of underwater diving. Heart problems, sinus or ear problems, lung trouble, and related health difficulties could make it risky for an affected individual to dive.

All divers should observe the following basic safety rules for diving:

- NEVER drink alcohol before diving.
- NEVER dive until you are a good swimmer.
- Stay in top physical condition.
- NEVER dive alone-use the buddy system.
- Use safe, reliable, time-proven equipment. Make sure your equipment is properly adjusted and maintained. Be familiar with your equipment.

- Be familiar with your diving area before diving, and plan each dive. If you are unfamiliar with the area, get instruction from a knowledgeable source.
- Always use a float with surface identification (diver's flag). This identification helps during rescue or for self-rescue.
- Heed all pains and strains as warning symptoms.
- Know basic first aid.
- Know and obey all local diving laws and regulations.
- Join a reputable diving club.
- Know the basic laws of diving physics and physiology.
- Practice skin diving frequently before scuba diving.
- NEVER wear goggles or earplugs when skin or scuba diving. They are **swimming** aids, not diving aids.
- Engage only in diving exercises that are consistent with your training and experience.

You should observe the following basic safety precautions for scuba diving:

- NEVER use pure oxygen in your tank; it is poison to a diver. Instead, use clean, filtered, certified, compressed air.
- Know your decompression rules and avoid planned decompression dives.
- Set up a system of communication with other divers; develop emergency procedures and procedures for reuniting in case of separation.
- NEVER hold your breath while scuba diving.
- NEVER dive when suffering from a cold, sore throat, or when feeling ill.
- NEVER ascend faster than 60 feet per minute. A usually safe rule of thumb is "NEVER ascend faster than the slowest bubbles."
- Wear a buoyancy compensation device and submersible pressure gauge.
- Adjust buoyancy to be slightly positive on full inhalation.

- Surface carefully to avoid coming up under a boat or some other object. If visibility is poor, extend one or both hands above your head to ward off any object.
- If you lose visual contact with your buddy, listen for the sound of escaping bubbles from the other scuba equipment. If unable to locate your buddy, pound on your cylinder to attract attention. If this fails, surface, locate your buddy, and then descend together.
- Check your cylinder pressure and equipment before a second dive.
- Know how to use an alternate air source and a low-pressure buoyancy compensation inflation system.

Boating

The purchase of a nautical-type or sailor's hat does not suddenly cloak a person in boating experience. The overwhelming majority of boat operators involved in fatal accidents have never taken a safe boating course. Before you go boating, take a safe boating course. For more information on the boat course, call the Coast Guard Boating Course hot line at 1-800-336-BOAT.

About 50 percent of all boating mishaps resulting in serious injuries involve alcohol. Operating a boat while intoxicated, with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.10 percent or more, carries a \$1,000 civil penalty. It carries a criminal penalty of up to \$5,000, 1 year in jail, or both.

Collisions or people falling overboard causes most boating injuries. If you fall or are accidentally thrown into the water, a personal flotation device (PFD) can save your life. U.S. Coast Guard studies show that up to 85 percent of all boating deaths could have been prevented if the victims had been wearing a PFD. Always wear a PFD when boating. Even though it isn't a Navy regulation, we strongly urge you to wear a PFD when you are in your own boat. However, in a watercraft owned by the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Department, the operator and any passengers must wear a PFD approved by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Match your motor to your boat. If you use a motor, have someone check it before your first boat trip of the season. Make sure you have a fire extinguisher aboard, along with tools and equipment to make minor motor adjustments or repairs. Make sure you have enough fuel before starting out. NEVER refuel with the motor running.

Do not go out in a small boat unless you are thoroughly familiar with the craft. Learn to handle your boat by practicing near shore in shallow, smooth water. Become familiar with the basic rules about right-of-ways, channel markings, anchorages, and use of lights.

Leave a float plan with a friend before you set out. Your plan should include the identification number of your boat, who is with you, where you are going, when you expect to return, and when to contact the Coast Guard. Inspect your boat each time before you use it, checking for leaks and other defects. Remove any water that may be present on the deck to reduce the possibility of slip hazards. Check weather conditions before you leave home and while on the water. Storms come up in a hurry. Learn to read cloud formations and other weather signs. Never leave the dock without all required safety equipment.

Make sure you do not overload or improperly load your boat. Counting the number of seats does not indicate capacity. Overloading is dangerous and reduces freeboard (the distance from the waterline to the edge of the boat). Improper loading makes a boat unstable or less maneuverable. Know the safe load capacity and recommended horsepower for your boat. The best place for the load is on the bottom and in the middle. Do not allow passengers to sit or stand on the bow, stern, or gunwales. In rough water, place the load, including passengers, low to keep the boat stable sideways; place the load away from the ends to give the bow and stern buoyancy.

Keep a small boat away from big boats, especially at night. Speedboats and paddle-wheelers are especially dangerous. Before large swells from a large boat reach your small boat, head into them. Slow down so they will slide under your boat from end to end.

TIPS IN CASE OF BOAT OR WEATHER TROUBLE.—What do you do in case of trouble? First of all, don't panic. The following are a few boating tips you should keep in mind:

- If you get trapped on the water by a sudden squall, point the bow into (toward) the wind. Reduce speed or shorten the sail at once.
- If you get caught in rough water, head the boat so that it receives the waves at a 45-degree angle either to the left or to right side of the bow. Do not get crosswise,
- Go slowly against a strong sea because speed can bury the bow, allowing more water to come aboard. Arrange your load to keep the bow up.

- Keep the boat well bailed; if necessary, throw out heavy items (not people) to lighten the craft.
- In swift current, do not grab for trees or bushes along the bank to slow up.
- If your boat capsizes or swamps, try to keep calm. Most small boats support several people even though filled with water. A swamped boat, right side up, will support about as many persons as it is designed to carry when afloat.
- If you can manage it, sit in the swamped boat. Do not try to swim for shore even if you think you can do it easily. Instead, paddle or row for shore or wait for help.
- In rough or cold water, maintain a firm hold on the boat with a belt or rope.

TIPS IN CASE SOMEONE FALLS OVERBOARD.— If someone falls overboard, grab the person quickly and hang on if possible. Get the person back into the boat as fast as you can. If the person tries to climb over the side in a panic, balance the boat until he or she gets in or quiets down. Throw a life preserver, cushion, or rope to a person who is some distance from the boat instead of going into the water after him or her.

Bring the person aboard over the stern if it is square; bring the person aboard near either the bow or stern if the stern is not square. Rescuers should keep low in the boat; that allows them to have one hand free, most of the time, to hang onto the boat.

Water Skiing

Water skiing is one of the most thrilling of water sports. Spectacular as it appears, it is among the easiest to learn. Many people, particularly children, master the basics within an hour. Even though it seems easy, you still must take precautions and know various factors before you ski.

To water-ski safely requires three people: the skier, the boat operator, and an observer who knows all the proper hand signals. It is not surprising that showing off is the chief cause of water-skiing mishaps.

Before you even think about strapping on a pair of water skis, learn correct and safe water-skiing techniques from a qualified instructor. The instructor will teach you how to hold the towline, how to “get up” on skis while keeping your balance, and how to control your skis.

<u>SIGNAL</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
A thumbs-up gesture	Boat faster
A thumbs-down gesture	Boat slower
Thumb and forefinger in shape of an <i>O</i>	Speed OK
Circle finger overhead and point in direction of turn desired	Turns
Raise hand with fingers spread	Stop
Slap thigh with hand	Return to dock or shore
Draw hand or finger across throat	Cut motor
Point in direction you wish to go, then point to yourself	Go that way
Clasp hands overhead while treading water (after fall)	I'm OK

Figure 11-3.—Water-skiing signals.

Before you water-ski, check your equipment, making sure the personal flotation device (PFD) you wear fits properly and is secure. Some states require a rearview mirror for the boat driver. Pay close attention to the tightness of the ski binders or runners.

Know the different water-skiing signals you must use to communicate with the boat operator and the observer (fig. 11-3). You only need to know two audible signals. When you are in the starting position and want the boat operator to take up the slack in your towline, shout “In gear,” When the line becomes taut, your ski tips are up, and you are ready to begin skiing, shout “Hit it” for your boat operator to open the throttle.

Relax when you ski. Holding the towline too tight and becoming tense are bad habits. A relaxed skier learns fast and takes few spills while learning. Don’t try stunts beyond your ability. Learn each stunt progressively. Leave the fancy skiing to the professionals.

NEVER wrap the towrope around any portion of your body or place your arms or legs through the bridle. Always ski in water that is deep enough. How do you know if the water is deep enough? Your skis should not touch bottom. Make sure the water is free of floating objects and other obstructions.

When you fall, and you *will fall*, fall backward and not forward whenever possible. At speeds above 25 mph, you should somersault or roll with the fall. Tuck your head beneath your arms and roll into a ball. Rolling not only controls the fall but blunts the impact. Don't tense up and stiffen. At lower speeds, lean to the side or back before you release the towline. When you release the towline, you will fall in the direction of the lean. You will hit with a thud, rather than a splash. Forget about your skis. You can retrieve them easily—they float, remember?

Hunting

The misuse of small arms has resulted in many accidents causing serious and fatal injuries to Navy personnel. Between 1987 and 1992, eight Navy men and women died in hunting and fishing mishaps. Ninety-one were injured in small arms accidents alone, most with guns they thought were unloaded. Firearms accidents kill as many females as males. The highest rate is in the 15- to 24-year age group.

Between one-fourth and one-third of all fatal, accidental shootings occur in connection with hunting trips. Annual studies of hunting accidents, both fatal and nonfatal, made by the National Rifle Association have shown firearm hunting accidents both by "intentional discharge" and "accidental discharge." The principal causes of accidents by intentional discharge have been as follows:

- Victim moved into line of fire without warning.
- Victim shot by excited hunter firing quickly at game.
- Victim unseen by shooter.
- Victim mistaken for game.

The principal causes of casualties occurring through the accidental discharge of the gun have included the following:

- Stumbling or falling while carrying gun
- Catching trigger of gun in brush
- Clubbing game or cover with gun
- Bumping or jolting the gun while removing it from vehicle or boat
- Unwittingly letting gun fall from an insecure rest
- Crossing a fence
- Horseplaying with a gun thought to be unloaded

- Loading and unloading gun

Before you go hunting, you should learn the safe use of firearms from a competent instructor. The instruction should take place on a well-protected range. Experienced adults should accompany young people learning to shoot and coach them in firearm safety. You should never try backyard target shooting. Practice basement or other indoor shooting only if you have constructed a satisfactory backstop. Avoid shooting at hard, horizontal surfaces because of the danger of a ricochet. If you find yourself shooting over water, exercise extreme caution to avoid ricochets.

As a hunter, you must concern yourself more about safety than about the possibility of your missing a chance at your game. Your attitude in these matters is the real difference between being a safe or unsafe hunter. Regardless of how much hunters know or how great their skill and experience, if they do not practice safety, they are unsafe hunters.

BICYCLING

Millions of people have found that biking is economical, healthy, and a great way for the entire family to take part in wholesome recreation. However, most of the time you will be sharing the road with vehicles of all shapes and sizes. Since a bicyclist is the most vulnerable participant in the highway system, observing safety rules is in your own best interest. That enables you to protect yourself against the carelessness of others.

The impact of a rider's head against a sidewalk from a 10-speed bike going 25 mph is as great as that of a rider thrown from a motorcycle at the same speed. From 1989 to 1992, more than 500 sailors were seriously injured or killed in bicycle accidents. More than 150 of those sailors suffered head injuries, 10 while wearing helmets. Helmets won't prevent head injuries in every bike accident, but they do make a difference in the severity of those injuries. You can protect yourself from serious injury by wearing an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or a Snell Memorial Foundation approved bicycle safety helmet. In addition, you can protect yourself by complying with OPNAVINST 5100.25A, which covers the Navy Recreation, Athletics, and Home Safety Program. This instruction requires all recreational bicyclists operating on government property to wear light-colored clothing and to wear reflective clothing during reduced visibility conditions.

ICE AND SNOW SPORTS

Ice and snow sports can be fun but deadly. In addition to the stresses placed on the body, there is the added hazard of extreme cold. Winter sports include the following activities:

- Ice skating
- Sledding, tobogganing, and snow disk riding
- Snowmobiling
- Skiing

Of these winter sports, Navy personnel experience the most mishaps from snow skiing. Each year thousands of people suffer injuries in skiing accidents. From 1984 to 1992, more than 150 Navy people have been hurt in mishaps on ski slopes and trails. One of these mishaps resulted in a fatality when a skier lost control in icy conditions and crashed into a tree. Another person suffered a permanent disability when he fractured a vertebrae in his lower back. Fortunately, most injuries are less severe, with broken legs and knee injuries commonly reported. You can still get hurt while cross-country skiing even though it is slower than downhill skiing.

The most common cause of skiing accidents is inexperience. Beginners hurt themselves when they try to move from a beginner's slope to advanced or expert slopes too soon. Trying slopes that are too steep or icy can result in injuries to even the more experienced skiers. The buildup of too much speed can cause you to lose control.

SAFETY FOR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

People take part in many sports and other athletic activities both as members of on- and off-base teams. Intramural sports are part of the total recreation program. Athletics provide a basic physical conditioning process through which the Navy can help build and maintain an effective fighting force.

Some athletic events have inherent risks for participants. Padding and protective equipment can help reduce injuries and are mandatory for some sponsored team events. A good athlete is familiar with the injury potential of the sport being played and knows how to avoid injuries. When you are injured, you are of little use to a team. Part of the skill of any sport is the ability of an athlete to avoid injury.

One factor repeatedly cited as a major contributor to a mishap involving physical fitness is overexertion.

Once people realize they are out of shape, they want to do something about it. Unfortunately, they usually try to get back into shape too fast. Age has nothing to do with deaths relating to overexertion while exercising. Anyone is subject to overexertion, regardless of age or physical conditioning. With today's emphasis on health and wellness, many people take up strenuous fitness activities before they condition their bodies.

Good physical fitness can pay off, if you do it carefully and consistently. However, strenuous exercise once a week can do more damage than good. Before you start any physical fitness program, check with your doctor. The doctor will determine what precautions you should take and if you need a complete physical exam. Checking with your doctor is especially important if you are more than 35 years old.

Baseball and Softball

Since baseball and softball present similar hazards, you should take similar precautions to avoid injury. The most serious mishaps associated with baseball and softball are those resulting from sliding and collisions. Breakaway bases are much safer than stationary bases. Softball fields operated by MWR departments are being converted from stationary to breakaway bases. Until the MWR installs breakaway bases, your command should conduct a sliding clinic. Establish a no-sliding rule for command-sponsored picnic and pickup games to prevent personnel from breaking their ankles and legs.



Establish a no-sliding rule.

Teammates need to communicate with each other to avoid collisions. Before the game, appoint the center fielder to call off teammates for outfield fly balls. Appoint the shortstop to do the same thing for infield fly balls. Make sure they make calls in a clear, loud voice. These precautions will keep players from running into each other and possibly resulting in a tragedy such as the one involving a highly skilled Navy technician. While going for a fly ball, this technician collided with another player; he never recovered from the impact and eventually died.

Basketball

Many basketball injuries result from people warming up improperly, wearing the wrong type of shoes, and playing too aggressively. Taping your ankles or using ankle supports with high-top shoes reduces the severity of ankle injuries. Don't wear running shoes for playing basketball. Your high top shoes should have 1/2 inch at the toe for clearance on the sudden stops and pivots common to basketball. They should have nonslip soles and provide adequate ventilation. In early season workouts, paint the soles of your feet with benzoin to lessen your chances of getting blisters. Wear an inner sock of light cotton underneath a wool or heavier-weight athletic sock.

Wear pads to protect your knees and elbows from bruises and floor burns. Wear a knee brace if you need knee support.

Setting up basketball courts on flight and hanger decks provides recreation at sea, but these courts can cause serious injuries. Twisting and pivoting on a nonskid deck, as well as Falling, can result in a variety of injuries. Be careful when playing on this type of surface.

Boxing

All participants, including boxers, coaches, referees, and physicians in a Navy boxing competition must attend at least one precompetition meeting or clinic. The purpose is to review concepts contained in the *Safety Awareness Manual* and explain procedures for training and competition. Other required publications include: *Official Boxing Rules*, *Physician's Ringside Manual*, and the *Introduction to Olympic Boxing* pamphlet. You can order copies of these publications (at a nominal charge) from the following address:

USA Boxing, Inc.
1750 East Bolder Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5776

Boxers must wear a mouthpiece, U.S.A. Amateur Boxing Federation approved protective headgear, gloves, and a groin protector during sparring and competition. All weight classes must wear 16-ounce gloves. The gloves will be either the thumbless type or thumb-attached type. Boxing gloves must be checked before use. They should be clean, be free of lumps, and have smooth surfaces. A boxer should be able to fasten them securely.

Mouthpieces must be custom-made and individually fitted. When sparring and during actual matches, boxers should wear protective headgear. Boxers should wrap their hands to protect them while sparring, while working out on the heavy bags, and for all matches.

Medical officers providing support must be familiar with and must meet the requirements of the *Physician's Ringside Manual*. The professional qualifications of these medical officers should include current competency in the emergency treatment of head trauma, management of traumatic injury, certification in basic and advanced cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and experience in transporting unstable patients.

For additional information on Navy boxing competition, refer to enclosure (7) of BUPERSINST 1710.20.

Football

Football is one of the most hazardous of all team sports because of the continuous heavy body contact. Only trained, well-conditioned players should take part in competitive football games. Players need not get hurt if they apply various safeguards.

All players must wear full-weight football shoulder, hip, thigh, and knee pads as well as headgear when they expect body contact both in practice and in the actual game. This gear must be properly fitted.

We recommend that anyone engaging in active sports wear a mouthpiece. The mouthpiece is a relatively inexpensive piece of equipment that reduces oral damage considerably. It also provides the cushion necessary to help prevent concussion from the shock of blows sustained by the head and chin.

Helmets provide a method of holding the skull away from the shell on impact. A helmet should have at least a 1-inch clearance between the outer shell and the nylon or canvas webbing into which the head fits. The helmet should be lined with vinyl plastic, which is 15 times more shock absorbent than foam rubber. The player must be able to hear in a helmet. Discard old helmets.

Flag/Touch Football

Some people think touch and flag football are safe sports because pads and helmets are not normally required. However, what usually starts as a friendly game often turns into a rough game of tackle. The shoulder block is the only block permitted in touch and flag football. It is done between the waist and shoulder with both feet contacting the ground at the moment of contact.

To prevent collisions, teams should leave a fumbled football lying on the ground. Neither team should be allowed to advance the football; it should belong to the team that last had possession.

When playing football, wear a mouthpiece to protect your teeth and your tongue. Don't wear chains, rings, and metal wrist bands. If you wear glasses, secure them and make sure the lenses are shatter-proof.

Golf

When playing golf, you should wear socks and well-fitted shoes to prevent blisters caused by long periods of walking and turning. When other players are hitting, watch their shots to avoid being hit by a ball or club. You should not hit your ball until the players ahead of you are well out of range. To keep from damaging your skin from the sun's rays, you may want to wear a protective cap and sun screen.

Avoid the golf course during electrical storms and severe weather. Golf clubs make excellent electricity conductors. If you get caught on the course, keep away from isolated trees, wire fences, hilltops, small sheds, and shelters in exposed areas. Try to reach thick timber or a depression in the ground or get near a steep cliff.



If caught in an electrical storm, do not delay; seek shelter.

Squash/Handball/Racquetball

Most injuries from racquet sports occur when players do not use the proper eye protection. These injuries include hemorrhaging of the eye area, cuts, and corneal abrasions. A racquetball travels about 80 miles per hour when hit. Goggles without lenses offer little protection. A small ball, like the one you use in racquetball or squash, compresses when you hit it and can penetrate open frames. How can you protect your eyes? Learning how to duck faster isn't the answer. Wearing the proper eye protection while playing racquetball is not only safe, it is mandatory. Wear impact-resistant eyewear with either molded polycarbonate wraparound protectors or lenses mounted in sturdy frames. This requirement applies to all participants (military, family members, civilians, and guests) at all times. The people that issue Navy recreational equipment should provide eye protection with racquetball rackets. In addition, wear a mouthpiece to protect your teeth and tongue.

Skateboarding

Skateboarding is a sport rapidly growing in popularity. Unfortunately, as its popularity increases, so do mishaps and injuries. Mishaps frequently occur when skateboarders lack balance and body control or haven't had enough practice. Several conditions contribute to skateboard mishaps and injuries: lack of protective equipment, poor board maintenance, and uneven riding surfaces. Fractures are the most common type of injuries for skateboarders. Some deaths have been reported, mostly from people falling off boards or colliding with cars.

When skateboarding, wear protective equipment, such as slip-resistant shoes, helmets, and specially designed padding. This equipment may not fully protect skateboarders from fractures, but it can reduce the number and severity of cuts and scrapes. Wrist braces and special skateboarding gloves also help absorb the impact of a Fall. With protective equipment, you must look for comfort, design, and function. The equipment should not interfere with your movement, vision, or hearing.

Roller Skating and In-Line Skating

Roller skating is an old sport in which a renewed interest has developed. In-line skating is a relatively new and exciting sport. The same injuries and mishaps we talked about earlier on skateboarding apply here. The

same types of PPE that apply to skateboarding also apply to these two sports.

Soccer

Americans have discovered what Europeans have enjoyed for a long time—the fast-paced game they call soccer. However, as the popularity of soccer grows, so do the mishaps and injuries associated with it. Soccer is a rough-and-tumble game. In addition to scrapes, bruises, and cuts, soccer players suffer sprains, muscle cramps, and broken bones.

When playing soccer, wear a knee brace if you need knee support. Wear a mouthpiece to protect your teeth and your tongue. Don't wear chains, rings, and metal wrist bands. If you wear glasses, secure them and make sure the lenses are shatter-proof.

Tennis

Tennis is a comparatively safe sport, except for the possibility of sprains and overexertion. If you are a tennis player, avoid overexertion in the hot sun and drink plenty of fluids. Wear socks and well-fitted shoes to prevent blisters.

Track and Field

Track and field events are relatively safe athletic activities. Being in good physical condition is extremely important if you are a runner because of the sustained physical exertion on your body. The memory of a well-trained Olympic marathoner barely making it across the finish line is a grim reminder of the rigors of track. Track officials must give immediate help to a runner in danger of collapsing at the end of a race. That prevents the runner from falling and getting injured.

Walking

Walking is an increasingly popular way to exercise. As the core of an effective fitness program, walking may be just what the doctor ordered. Regular walking will normally help in lowering your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Both may reduce the risk of heart attack. Walking may also reduce depression and anxiety.

Wrestling

The very nature of wrestling—constant body contact, sudden falls and movements, and the injury potential of the various wrestling holds—makes it a

hazardous sport. Qualified leaders must supervise all wrestling activities to prevent injury to participants.

SAFETY IN THE HOME

In 1992, home fatalities and serious injuries were significantly lower than in 1991. This improvement is partially because of increased command emphasis on preventing off-duty mishaps, greater safety awareness, and training.

You can prevent mishaps, such as children's poisoning, lawn mower mishaps, and home fires. Most of these mishaps occur because of human error, such as lack of knowledge, inattention or distraction, or intentional violation of safety practices. You and your family can prevent nearly ALL injuries and deaths that occur in the home. It is up to you to take home the safety measures you learn on the job and teach them to the rest of your family.

Slips and Falls

Most home mishaps involve falls. Falls are the third leading cause of death for off-duty Navy personnel. Most people fall on level surfaces, not from higher places. The following are the most common causes of slips and falls:

- Slipping on small scatter rugs
- Walking on highly polished or wet floors
- Tripping on upturned or torn carpets
- Walking on dark stairways
- Standing on chairs to extend one's reach

Falls may happen because of spilled water or grease on kitchen floors. Slippery conditions can exist because of water on bathroom floors. Toys left on the floor of the living room and other parts of the house are also trip hazards.

The bathroom is the most common area in the average home where falling mishaps take place. However, bathtub and shower falls have decreased over the last 25 years because of anti-slip bath mats, stick-on applique slip-proofing, and manufacturer-applied slip-proofing.

Ladders

Every home should have a ladder. If you don't have one, you should get one and learn to use it properly. Whether you use a ladder to paint a ceiling, to clean out

the gutters, or for any other purpose, take some extra precautions. Most ladders sold for household use are type III light-duty ladders, rated for a maximum load of 200 pounds (user plus materials). If the ladder must carry more weight than that, select a type II medium-duty ladder (up to 225 pounds) or a type I heavy-duty ladder (up to 250 pounds). Most manufacturers label ladders with their duty rating or type number. Remember, don't overload your ladder.

Hobby Shop Equipment

If you have or use a hobby or craft shop, you should not allow bench, table, or work areas to become cluttered. Periodically remove excess trim and scrap to proper containers to prevent excessive accumulation. Return tools to their proper place when you no longer need them. Clean machines and floor areas after use. You must always wear the correct PPE.

Wear snug clothing when operating machinery and equipment. Do not operate equipment while wearing a necktie or scarf or anything that could become entangled in the revolving machinery. Do NOT wear gloves when working with drills, rip saws, table saws, and so on. Make sure you know the location of the power switch. Remove all jewelry. Use a brush, not your hands, to remove chips or cuttings.

Check drill bits to make sure they are straight and sharp. Make sure you tighten all chucks and clamps securely. Stop all equipment when making adjustments. NEVER reach around revolving equipment. You must be careful of kickback or violent throwback of the material you are feeding. Inspect saw blades to make sure they are in good condition and are free of gum or adhered resins. Check all machine safety guards. They should be substantial, in place, and properly aligned. Never operate the equipment without the safety guards, spreader, and anti-kickback fingers in place and properly adjusted. Set a saw blade to the proper cutting height. Adjust the fence or gauge, and secure it firmly.

When using equipment having blades, shut off the power and let the blade stop rotating before cleaning away debris. Never reach over or under the blade while operating the saw. Hold the stock firmly against the table and fence, and feed with even pressure within the capacity of the saw to take the load. Do not stand directly in line with stock you are putting through.

Note any clicking sound of a band saw, which indicates a cracked blade. Do NOT operate the saw if you hear that sound. Inspect the saw for excessive "burning" and buildup of gum or resins on the blade of

wheel surfaces. Use the proper size blade for the work. Do not cut small radius work on a wide band. Conversely, be sure the blade is as wide as the work will permit.

Do not stop or slow a saw by braking with a piece of wood. Permit natural rundown of the saw. Inspect the condition of the material. Test for safe depth of cut on a piece of soft, straight stock before proceeding.

Electricity

Electricity has made life in the home much more comfortable and housework much easier. However, electricity is not a blessing without blemishes. Electricity at home can be either a servant or a killer. It all depends on how you handle it. To keep electricity in your home your servant, NOT your killer, obey the safety rules for each part of your home.

Install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) near bathroom and kitchen sinks as well as outdoors. GFCIs are shock-protection devices that detect electrical faults to prevent people from being seriously injured or killed. They detect electrical faults by monitoring circuit leakage to ground. When leakage exceeds 5 milliamps, the GFCI breaks the circuit, thereby preventing an electric shock. You can easily install them in the place of existing outlets, and they are relatively inexpensive.

Electrical appliances or other electrical items do not normally present a shock hazard to you unless they are defective. How do you reduce shock hazard? You should inspect the item before and after use, follow all safety standards, and use only materials approved by testing laboratories. Even when an electrical item in your home becomes defective, you can reduce the chance of its becoming a shock hazard to you. You do that by keeping your body from becoming part of the electrical circuit. A 110-volt house current kills more people annually than any other voltage. It takes less electricity to kill a person than it does to light a 10-watt light bulb. If you do not maintain the electrical equipment and systems in your home, they can be a threat to you and your family's safety.

Fires

In 1991, 3,500 Americans died and 21,275 were injured in home fires. That's roughly about 15 people a day. Most home fires result from unattended cooking, careless smoking habits, overloaded electrical circuits, and children playing with matches. You and your family should know in advance what to do in case of fire. Obviously, you should do everything possible to

prevent a fire in the first place. The three main precautions you should take to help prevent fires are as follows:

1. Install fire or smoke detectors.
2. Plan fire escapes.
3. Reduce fire hazards.

Most fatal home fires occur at night while people sleep. Smoke usually precedes measurable amounts of heat in most cases of fire. Fire produces toxic gases and smoke that actually numbs the senses. If you are asleep or become disoriented by toxic gases, you may not even realize there is a fire. You cannot rely on your own senses to detect a fire. So, it is extremely important for you to install fire or smoke-detectors to sound an alarm. In addition, you and your family should practice escape drills. Make sure everyone in the family knows the phone number of the fire department.

There are two types of detectors—smoke detectors and fire detectors. Smoke detectors sound an alarm at the first trace of smoke. Heat or fire detectors sound an alarm to warn of an abnormally high temperature in the immediate area of the detector. Detectors can either be battery operated or part of a home's central wiring system. Be sure to install a detector on a circuit that you cannot turn off at a wall switch.

The National Fire Prevention Association's (NFPA) Standard 74 for household fire-warning equipment recommends you install one smoke detector outside each sleeping area of your house. You should install additional detectors on each story of your house. Don't forget the basement and attic, too. Supplement these detectors with additional detectors around the home, such as in hallways, utility rooms, the dining room, and furnace room.

Smoke rises, filling the highest points in a house, before moving down to the floor. To detect the first traces of smoke, mount the detector high on a wall or on the ceiling. Mount ceiling-mounted fire or smoke detectors at least 4 inches away from any wall. If you mount a detector on a wall, allow 4 to 12 inches from the ceiling. In a room with a high-pitched ceiling, mount the detector on or near the highest point of the ceiling. DO NOT install fire or smoke detectors near windows, doors, or air registers where drafts could affect their sensitivity.

Children

More children die each year from preventable injuries than from childhood diseases. Accidents are

killing our children at an alarming rate. Mishaps are the leading cause of death for children aged 1 to 14 years.

The Department of Defense (DOD) takes part in a national campaign to safeguard our children. The National Safe Kids Campaign began in 1988 to eliminate mishaps to children through parental education and improvement of national safety codes and standards. To provide a balanced program covering all facets of children's safety, the campaign focuses each year on a different high-risk area.

BURNS AND SCALDS.— The number of children burned and scalded is alarmingly high. Many children under age 14 are treated in emergency rooms after being scalded by food; tap water; and hot liquids, such as grease. Most of these scalds occur in the kitchen. Keep all pots and pans out of children's reach. Keep hot substances away from the edges of tables and counters.

Hot tap water can easily scald children, especially in the bathtub. Always supervise your children in and around water. To prevent tap water scalds, stay with your children while they are taking a bath. You should check the temperature of bath water before bathing your child. (Hot water heaters should not be set higher than 120 degrees.)

Keep dangling enticements, such as a coffee pot cord or the drape of a table cloth, away from children.

POISONING AND CHOKING.— Every 30 seconds a child is poisoned in this country. A bottle of kitchen cleanser is harmless when adults use it to clean areas of the house. However, put that same bottle of kitchen cleanser into the hands of a curious child and you have a deadly situation. Children cannot protect themselves from accidental poisoning. You can, however, prevent accidental poisonings in your home. Some causes of children's accidental poisonings are medicines, household chemicals, cleaning products, make up, and plants; medicines cause most of the poisonings. Keep such common household items out of sight and reach of children.

OFF-DUTY MISHAP INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING

The commanding officer is responsible for seeking ways and means of controlling and preventing injuries. That includes both on- and off-duty activities. Whether personnel are injured on the job or at home, their injuries can have an impact on mission readiness. Mishap prevention also extends to off-duty activities.

Mishaps in the category of “home, sports, and recreation” rank second only to privately owned motor vehicle accidents as a major cause of accidental injury. Sports and recreational injuries cost the Navy millions of dollars each year and result in a loss of countless man-years of work. In addition, these injuries result in impaired combat effectiveness because of the loss of skilled personnel—some temporarily disabled and others permanently handicapped.

In sports mishaps involving the category of “supervisory deficiencies,” the major factor is inadequate instruction. That shows the need for sound coaching and officiating of athletic contests. Is the intent of athletic contests to develop the body and a competitive spirit or just to win? You can effectively reduce injuries in sports and recreation by following these principles:

- Use proven administrative controls
- Effectively lead and supervise
- Provide and maintain adequate equipment and facilities
- Properly condition participants

You can prevent mishaps at home and in sports and recreation by identifying, isolating, eliminating, or controlling hazards. You should guard against those hazards you cannot eliminate. Finally, avoid creating new hazards.

Refer to OPNAVINST 5102.1C, *Mishap Investigation and Reporting*, for a list of the requirements for investigation and reporting of mishaps ashore. You must report any fatality or injury that occurs on government property, whether it involves civilian personnel, military personnel, or military dependents. Additionally, report fatalities or injuries that occur in conjunction with command-sponsored events off government property. Afloat, mishaps are reported based on OPNAVINST 5100.21B, *Afloat Mishap Investigation and Reporting*. In general, an injury is reportable if the injured person loses at least 5 working days because of that injury. All fatalities are reportable. These reports are sent to the Naval Safety Center within 30 days of the mishap.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we addressed the Navy Recreation, Athletics, and Home Safety Program. We examined the various types of personal protective equipment (PPE) individuals must wear when taking part in various sporting, athletic, and home activities. We discussed the various training Navy personnel must receive. We addressed various recreational safety controls commands and supervisors must follow. We discussed safety precautions for various recreation and athletic activities, including water sports. We covered various home hazards and safety precautions. Finally, we examined the reporting and investigating requirements for recreation and sports mishaps.

